# A WORD TO THE WEARY.

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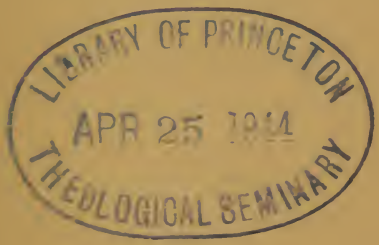
BY

WILLIAM S. PLUMER, D.D.

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# A WORD IN SEASON TO HIM THAT IS WEARY.

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Sin and sorrow are twin sisters. They were born the same day. They have grown up together. It is as idle to say that there is no misery as to assert that there is no wickedness in the world.

Some men seem to be uniformly prosperous. They appear to have but few trials. They have more than heart can wish. They are receiving their good things in this life. They are the abhorred of the Lord. Their eternity will be rueful. Yet even they have their seasons of weariness. And the mass of men have many and palpable sorrows. This is always true of the godly in this life: "Many

are the afflictions of the righteous." "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." The tears of God's people often flow, day and night. Waters of a full cup are wrung out to them. Oh, the weariness of good men! It has many causes. Sometimes it comes from—

## POOR HEALTH.

No less than others, God's people are liable to pain and sickness. More pitiable objects, as to bodily suffering, have seldom, if ever, been seen than were Job and Lazarus. Many a time God's people "have no rest in their bones;" they have "wearisome nights appointed unto them;" they are made to "cry in the morning, oh, that it were evening! and in the evening, oh, that it were morning!" It was proof of the kindness of John's

heart, when he wrote to Gaius, "Beloved, I wish, above all things, that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." Nor are those forms of bodily suffering which are most unpleasant to look upon always the most distressing. One sometimes says of another, "There is not much the matter with him; he is only nervous." Such speech is foolish. Nervous distress may be, and often is, the severest of all suffering. The theory of death by the cross was, that it took life by torturing the nervous system. It is sad, indeed, when one is forced to say, "There is no soundness in my flesh, because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones." There are "sore sicknesses, and of long continuance." To the godly there is no promise of exemption from distressing bodily infirmity. Even Elisha

fell sick of a sickness whereof he died. How sadly Hezekiah felt all the power of the bodily distress that bore him down, we learn from his own words. Isa. xxxviii. 9–20. Let one take the daily rounds of the faithful pastor and evangelist, and he will see in garrets and cellars, as well as in stately mansions, scenes of bodily suffering well suited to appall. If one is thus tried, let him cast his care upon the Lord, and cease to glory in his strength, or to put confidence in an arm of flesh. Let him have faith in God, and sing—

When languor and disease invade
This trembling house of clay,
'Tis sweet to look beyond my pains,
And long to fly away.

Sweet to look inward, and attend
The whispers of His love ;
Sweet to look upward, to the place
Where Jesus pleads above.

Sweet to reflect how grace divine
My sins on Jesus laid;
Sweet to remember that His blood
My debt of suffering paid.

Sweet in His righteousness to stand,
Which saves from endless death;
Sweet to experience, day by day,
His Spirit's quickening breath.

Sweet on His faithfulness to rest,
Whose love can never end;
Sweet on his covenant of grace
For all things to depend.

If such the sweetness of the streams,
What must the fountain be;
Where saints and angels draw their bliss
Immediately from Thee.

*Toplady.*

## POVERTY.

God's people also know much of poverty and worldly embarrassment. God has marvellously chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith, and

heirs of the kingdom that cannot be moved. With few exceptions, those who shall be kings and priests unto God forever know on earth what want is. In this point most Christians are conformed, at least in a measure, to the sufferings of Christ. Those who have not felt this form of trial can hardly conceive of the pangs of good men when they see poverty, like an armed man, marching into their abodes, and stripping them of their comforts, and sometimes of the necessaries of life. It is a blessed thing that, if we are poor, it is because such is the will of God, for the Lord maketh poor and He maketh rich. The Lord is specially the friend of the poor, and will avenge their wrongs, and punish their oppressors, and maintain the right of the poor. "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith?"

O, let me make the Lord my trust,
And practice all that's good;
So shall I dwell among the just,
And He'll provide me food.

I to my God my ways commit,
And cheerful wait His will;
Thy hand, which guides my doubtful feet,
Shall my desires fulfill.

The meek at last the earth possess
And are the heirs of heaven;
True riches, with abundant peace,
To humble souls are given;

The heavenly heritage is theirs,
Their portion and their home;
He feeds them now, and makes them heirs
Of blessings long to come.

Eternal life can ne'er be sold,
The ransom is too high;
Justice will ne'er be bribed with gold,
That man may never die.

Rest in the Lord and keep his way,
Nor let your anger rise,
Though Providence shall long delay
To punish haughty vice.

*Watts.*

## THE DEFECTION OF FRIENDS.

Sorrows seldom come single. Like vultures, they are gregarious. A major part of one's friends are commonly such only when he is prosperous. Most trees are left naked soon after heavy frosts begin to fall upon them. Very few men are friends in need. One or two acts of enlarged kindness frequently exhaust human sympathies. It pierces the heart of a good man to see the heel of his familiar friend lifted up against him. Sometimes those, to whom we have done the best services, become cold and even cruel. The son of Sirach spoke wisely, when he said: "Some man is a friend for his own occasion, and will not abide in the day of thy trouble. And there is a friend, who being turned to enmity and strife, will discover (reveal) thy reproach.

Again, some friend is a companion at the table, and will not continue in the day of affliction. But in thy prosperity he will be as thyself, and will be bold over thy servants. If thou be brought low, he will be against thee, and will hide himself from thy face." This witness is true. If a merchant would know how few his real friends are, let him suffer his note to go to protest. The same wise ancient said: "A faithful friend is a strong defence; and he that hath found such a one hath found a treasure. Nothing doth countervail a faithful friend, and his excellency is invaluable. A faithful friend is the medicine of life." Ecclus, vi. 8-14. To find out the deceitfulness of men by the loss or treachery of a professed friend is a very sad lesson. It is no mean attraction of heaven, that there all apparent friendships are real and beyond suspicion.

When such desertions of friends occur, we should cleave the closer to Christ. He is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. His words are very kind: "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." John xv. 15. Having loved His own, He loved them to the end. His mercy knows no bounds. His friendship is lasting as eternity. Flee to Him.

Oh, could I speak the matchless worth,
Oh, could I sound the glories forth,
Which in my Saviour shine!
I'd soar and touch the heavenly strings,
And vie with Gabriel while he sings,
In notes almost divine.

I'd sing the precious blood he spilt,
My ransom from the dreadful guilt
Of sin, and wrath divine:
I'd sing his glorious righteousness,

In which all-perfect, heavenly dress
My soul shall ever shine.

I'd sing the characters he bears,
And all the forms of love he wears,
Exalted on his throne;
In loftiest songs of sweetest praise,
I would to everlasting days
Make all His glories known.

Soon the delightful day will come,
When my dear Lord will call me home,
And I shall see His face:
Then with my Saviour, Brother, FRIEND,
A blest eternity I'll spend,
Triumphant in His grace.

*Medley.*

## THE DEATH OF LOVED ONES.

This is a world of change. Nothing is certain but change. Friendships are often sundered by death. Father, mother, husband, wife, brother, sister, child—any loved one may be taken as in a moment; or, if they agonize till we are willing to see

them go, so that they may be out of misery, that is perhaps more distressing than to have them taken in a way that greatly surprises us. Men are born to die. Dust we are, and to dust we must all retnrn. Our dearest friends are lent to us but for a short time. Of this we have full notice in God's word and in His providence also. In many of our churches half the worshippers hang out the signals of distress in their very attire. And those, who wear no mourning apparel, are perhaps as sorely bereaved as those who are most mourningly attired. Of those who die, some were our care, some our hope, some our pattern, some our guide, some our stay. If a loved one is taken without giving signs of true repentance, the distress is exceedingly terrible. It is like that of David over Absalom. "And the king was much moved, and went

up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" Sometimes our loved ones are taken away in circumstances where hope and fear respecting their eternal happiness alternate. In this way multitudes are sadly grieved. But even where there is a quiet and fixed persuasion that our departed friends were at peace with God, we still sorely miss them. How does the mother's heart ache for the little one that nestled in her bosom! How does conjugal affection bleed, when it is rifled of its darling object! How sad is the cry when the brother says to the sister, on their return from the cemetery, "Well, dear Mary, we have no longer any earthly parent. We are fatherless and motherless. We are

orphans." Many a father has said, like Jacob, "If I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved."

In such sad hours what can we do, unless we have access to the mercy-seat? God is our refuge and strength —the sole refuge and strength of our souls in the day of sorrow and bereavement. Blessed is the man, who finds in the Lord all needed resources.

Friend after friend departs;
Who has not lost a friend?
There is no union here of hearts,
That finds not here an end.
Were this frail world our final rest,
Living or dying, none were blest.

Beyond the flight of time,
Beyond the reign of death,
There surely is some blessed clime
Where life is not a breath,
Nor life's affections, transient fire,
Whose sparks fly upward and expire.

There is a world above,
  Where parting is unknown;
A long eternity of love,
  Formed for the good above;
And faith beholds the dying here,
  Translated to that glorious sphere.

Thus star by star declines,
  Till all are passed away,
As morning high and higher shines
  To pure and perfect day;
Nor sink those stars in empty night,
  But hide themselves in heaven's own light.

*Montgomery.*

## UNKIND SPEECHES.

This is a wicked world, and the tongue is a principal instrument of the wickedness, that makes earth so much like the pit of woe. The tongue is a world of iniquity. Laws, and bars, and bolts, and racks cannot check its mischief. Unjust reproaches, uncharitable surmises and censorious rumors often fill God's people

with grief. David bewails the fact that he was "the song of the drunkard." Job bemoans himself because "the children of those, whom he would not have set among the dogs of his flock," and even his own servants treated him scornfully. True religion does not create insensibility to the value of a quiet life, or of a good name. It refines and strengthens our lawful regards to the good opinions of others. One of the bitter ingredients in the Master's cup of sorrow was calumny and misrepresentation. He says: "Reproach hath broken my heart." Ps. lxix. 26. Sometimes the sins of slander and backbiting, reproach and detraction come over society like desolating waves.

Then the good man says, "My soul dwelleth among lions." "Every day they wrest my words." "Oh, that I had wings like a dove! for then

would I fly away and be at rest." "Thou lovest all devouring words, O, though deceitful tongue." The anguish thus caused is dreadful. Let those who have felt it testify. One says: "There is a persecution sharper than the axe. There is an iron that goes into the heart deeper than the knife. Cruel sneers, and sarcasms, and pitiless judgments, and cold-hearted calumnies — these are persecutions." But of old, one said: "The words of a tale-bearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly." Prov. xxvi. 22. "Death and life are in the power of the tongue." Prov. xviii. 21.

Among mine enemies my name
A proverb vile has grown,
While to my neighbors I become
Forgotten and unknown.

Hard lot of mine! my days are cast
Among the sons of strife,

Whose never-ceasing quarrels waste
My golden hours of life.

Peace is the blessing that I seek,
How lovely are its charms!
I am for peace; but when I speak,
They all declare for arms.

Slander and fear, on every side,
Seized and beset me round:
I to Thy throne of grace applied,
And speedy rescue found.

Within thy sacred presence, Lord,
Let me forever dwell;
No fenced city, walled and barred,
Secures a saint so well.

Fear Him, ye saints; and you will then
Have nothing else to fear;
Come, make His service your delight;
He'll make your cause His care.

*Watts.*

## REAL PERSECUTION.

We have the highest authority for saying that all who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

Although in most lands the lion is chained; yet everywhere the seed of the bondwoman hates the seed of the freewoman. It has always been so; so it will continue to the end of the reign of wickedness. There are many ways of persecution, even in free countries. Social proscription, vexatious lawsuits, a general disposition to disoblige, the withholding of what is just and equal, and in countless ways harassing with malignity those who merit no such measure at our hands, are very common. There is often persecution in one's tone and temper towards another, in his words, and in countless little actions, as well as in tormenting with the penalties of laws made to afflict good men. In some parts of the world the whole system of taxation, both in assessing and collecting it, is in the very spirit of persecution. It is amazing how

far even good men sometimes go, not only in conniving at outrages committed on others, but in fanning the flame of fury. Many others profess to hold with the hare, but they hunt with the hound. The number of men who are valiant for the truth and the right is small. A large number of at least a good sort of men will say, It is no good thing that the malicious are doing; but they will risk nothing and do nothing to arrest the course of malice and wrong-doing. Even in the present century blood has been poured out like water in the cause of truth and righteousness. In the early ages of Christianity, as well as since,

"Persecution walked
The earth, from age to age, and drank the blood
Of saints, with horrid relish drank the blood
Of God's peculiar children—and was drunk;

And in her drunkenness dreamed of doing
good.
The supplicating hand of innocence,
That made the tiger mild, and in his wrath
The lion pause—the groans of suffering most
Severe, were naught to her: she laughed at
groans:
No music pleased her more; and no repast
So sweet to her as blood of men redeemed
By blood of Christ."

One good effect of persecution in every form is its tendency to purify the Church of God. A false professor can seldom stand such a test. Milner says: "Persecution often does in this life what the last day will do completely—separate the wheat from the tares." Blessed be God, there is a land where persecution never reaches.

And will the God of grace
Perpetual silence keep?
The God of Justice hold his peace,
And let His vengeance sleep?

Behold what cruel snares
The men of mischief spread;
The men that hate Thy saints and Thee,
Lift up their threatening head.

Against Thy hidden ones,
Their counsels they employ;
And malice, with her watchful eye,
Pursues them to destroy.

"Come, let us join (they cry)
To root them from the ground,
Till not the name of saints remain,
Nor memory shall be found."

Awake, Almighty God,
And call Thy power to mind;
Make them to bow before Thy will,
And let them pardon find.

Convince their madness, Lord,
And make them seek Thy name;
Or else their impious rage confound,
And turn their pride to shame.

*Watts.*

## DEATH AND THE GRAVE.

God's people know that they must die. As naturally as others, they

shrink from pain and the grave. The love of life was probably as strong in man before his fall as it is now in most men. The temporal penalty attached to eating the forbidden fruit derived its force from a desire to live. Some good people are constitutionally timid; and some of them are much inclined to look on the dark side of things. In fact, some habitually expect the worst. Unless we are sustained by high Christian hopes and principles, sober reflection on death and its consequences must beget uneasiness in the firmest. Nor can anything wholly and permanently remove the fear of death but divine grace. Death is both the king of terrors, and the terror of kings. Men have, without apparent alarm, stormed a deadly breach. But when, in the quiet of a chamber, they have been told that their time of de-

parture was near, fear has blanched their cheek. It is no marvel that the mass of men should dwell on the subject with real discomfort. It greatly humbles the righteous to remember that they deserve death, and even worse than any temporal suffering can possibly be. Sometimes their sense of unworthiness is accompanied with low spirits. Then it looks as if they may expect sorrow upon sorrow, till they are swallowed up of grief. For fifty-five years I have been considerably familiar with beds of sickness and of death. I have seen many die, but I have not in that time seen one comfortable death, where the good hope through grace in Christ was wanting; nor have I ever seen the righteous forsaken in his last moments. I once knew an eminent child of God, who was subject to seasons of insanity, accompanied by awful depression

of spirits. She had such a spell not long before death, but as she approached near her end, her mind became clear, and she left the world not only tranquilly, but joyfully. One thing is very cheering; it is that the young, the nervous, and even those who had long been in bondage through the fear of death, but were able to put their whole reliance on Christ, were in the last days of life among the very bravest and brightest of dying saints.

Oh! to be ready when death shall come!
Oh! to be ready to hasten home!
No earthward clinging, no lingering gaze,
No strife at parting, no sore amaze,
No chains to sever that earth hath twined,
No spell to loosen that love would bind.

No flitting shadows to dim the light
Of the angel-pinions winged for flight,
No cloud-like phantoms to fling a gloom
'Twixt heaven's bright portals and earth's dark
tomb;

But sweetly, gently, to pass away
From the world's dim twilight into day.

To list the music of angel lyres,
To catch the rapture of seraph fires,
To lean in trust on the risen One,
Till borne away to a fadeless throne.
Oh ! to be ready when death shall come !
Oh ! to be ready to hasten home !

*Anon.*

## THE STATE OF THE CHURCH ON EARTH.

This often makes the righteous sad. In all nations the wicked have a fearful power, commonly a large majority ; and they wield their power against the truth. Every government on earth is more or less anti-Christian in its laws and usages. The love of many, from whom good things had been expected, has waxed cold ; many turn aside to fables and to jangling ; some embrace and

disseminate troublesome notions; others hold and propagate damnable heresies. Even Charity itself, because it rejoiceth in the truth, dares not hope that the mass of nominal Christians and teachers in the visible Church are the real friends of God. Worldliness, vanity, formality, sloth, backsliding, want of tenderness of conscience, and lack of zeal, are fearfully prevalent. Among the pious is often heard the cry, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" Barren ordinances and an unfruitful ministry fill the pious with grief. No famine is so dreadful as a famine of the Word of God; no drought is so much to be deprecated as a dearth of spiritual influences. When the heavens become brass, and glow like a furnace, and the earth becomes iron, man and beast are often in great straits. But, if the whole Church of God at that

very time were thrifty and abundant in every good work, joy might still abound. It is sad indeed when few of the sons of the Church offer themselves to be her ministers, when pillars in the temple are fallen, and others rise not up to take their place. That was a doleful cry of the prophet, "Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men." Ps. xii. 1. One sight is inconceivably sad: it is that of a rich harvest perishing for the want of reapers to gather it in.

Saviour, visit Thy plantation;
Grant us, Lord, a gracious rain:
All will come to desolation,
Unless Thou return again:
Lord, revive us;
All our help must come from Thee.

Keep no longer at a distance,
Shine upon us from on high;
Lest for want of Thine assistance,

Every plant should droop and die;
Lord, revive us;
All our help must come from Thee.

Let our mutual love be fervent,
Make us prevalent in prayers;
Let each one esteemed Thy servant,
Shun the world's bewitching snares.
Lord, revive us;
All our help must come from Thee.

Break the tempter's fatal power;
Turn the stony heart to flesh;
And begin from this good hour,
To revive Thy work afresh.
Lord, revive us;
All our help must come from Thee.

*Newton.*

## THE SPIRITUAL WARFARE.

Heavy as are the other trials of the Christian life, their power of producing distress is not comparable to spiritual distress. The greatest warfare is the conflict with sin and temptation. To be tempted of the devil

is, in a sense, to be tormented of the devil; and when the heart at all yields to the seductions of the wicked one, and the conscience is defiled by sin, the anguish is sometimes intolerable. Read and study the 32d, 51st, and 130th Psalms, if you would know how sin has of old seduced and afflicted. "The spirit of a man sustaineth his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?" In their own spiritual state, the pious often find cause of discomfort and weariness hardly capable of expression. Long after David knew and loved God, he compares his distresses to broken bones; he is so covered with shame that he cannot look up; he forgets to take bread, and piteously cries out, "Iniquities prevail against me!" Look at Peter going out and weeping bitterly. Hear Paul saying, "O, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver

me?" By Isaiah, the whole Church says, "Our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." Is. lxiv. 6. Sometimes these spiritual conflicts are rendered more distressing by the hiding of God's countenance. One's fellowship does not then seem to be with the Father and with the Son. When close and comfortable communion with God is much interrupted, one feels that his Helper and Friend is gone. At such times prayer is almost a task, praise almost a burden, and Satan seems to be let loose, and even blasphemies are thrust into the mind. Then despairing thoughts are almost overpowering. Sin becomes bold. Resistance seems unavailing. The soul cries for help, but there is none; for salvation, but it is afar off. The terrors of the Law are let loose. Conscience thunders. God Himself seems to have forgotten

to be gracious. Then, with Jeremiah, the soul cries out, "Why is my pain perpetual, and my wound incurable, which refuseth to be healed? wilt thou altogether be unto me as a liar, and as waters that fail?" Jer. xv. 18. Perhaps the words of the Psalmist still better express the feeling of the soul: "Will the Lord cast off forever? and will He be favorable no more? Is his mercy clean gone forever? doth his promise fail forevermore? hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath He, in anger, shut up his tender mercies?" Ps. lxxvii. 7–9. The old cry, "O Lord, how long?" is often heard in the assemblies of the saints.

When my sins, in aspect dread,
Meet like waters o'er my head,
Seen in light of God's own face,
Darker for his offered grace;
When I sigh for healing rest,

By a hopeless yoke opprest,
Struggling in a grasp too strong,
Borne, as by a wind, along ;
Then I hear that voice from heaven :
" Knock, and entrance shall be given."

*Anon.*

Sometimes very strange temptations overtake the people of God. Time would fail to state the half of them. Here is one. In a letter, John Newton says: " I was for a while troubled with a very singular thought. . . I seemed not so much afraid of wrath and punishment as of being lost and overlooked amidst the myriads that are continually entering the unseen world. 'What is my soul,' thought I, 'among such an innumerable multitude of beings?' And this troubled me greatly. Perhaps the Lord would take no notice of me. I was thus greatly perplexed." In like manner, Pollock says of himself that—

"—he as some atom seemed which God
Had made superfluously, and needed not
To build creation with ; but back again
To nothing threw, and left it in the void,
With everlasting sense that once it was."

However strange such thoughts may seem to those who never had them, yet there is laid for them a broad foundation in the ignorance, guilt, and fears of unregenerate nature. Even where grace has imparted some knowledge of God and His mercy to sinners, such fears may spring up. A consciousness of one's unworthiness, and inability to be profitable to God ; a strong sense of ill-desert, accompanied with weak faith in the divine mercy and perfections may much depress a pious mind. Feeling unworthy of any notice from God, it fears He may doom it to everlasting neglect and eternal desolation. When God seems to be pursuing it

in displeasure, the soul says, as David said to Saul, "After whom is the King of Israel come out? after whom dost thou pursue? after a dead dog, after a flea?" Sam. xxiv. 14. To the same effect Job speaks in his distress: "Wilt thou break a leaf driven to and fro? and wilt thou pursue the dry stubble?" Job xiii. 25. And because one feels as if he were beneath the dignity of God's wrath, he also fears that he may be beneath the regards of His mercy.

Sometimes the wicked one besets good men with doubts concerning the omniscience or omnipresence of God. It seems to them that God is not noticing what takes place. Their faith is weak, and they sink into despondent thoughts. One goes "forward, but God is not there; and backward, but he cannot perceive him; on the left-hand, where he doth

work, but he cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the right hand, that he cannot see him." Job xxiii. 8, 9. In its trouble, the soul, not seeing God, thinks God does not see it. The "eyes fail, from looking upward." No God appears; no helper comes. Then the tempter urges that God does not see, or does not regard. In such a state men are ready to say: "Master, carest Thou not that we perish?" Mark iv. 38.

The absence of a firm faith in God's watchful care will destroy one's comfort.

"AS ONE WHOM HIS MOTHER COMFORTETH, SO WILL I COMFORT YOU."

"So will I comfort you," as when a sobbing child
Seeks sweet heart-comfort on its mother's breast;
By her caresses fond, unconsciously beguiled
From memories of pain, soon sinks to rest.

"Ye shall be comforted." Our hearts are faint and sore;
We would be little children once again;
But childhood would bring back the griefs we knew of yore,
But not the mother who caressed us then.

We need a stronger love, we seek a deeper rest,
Whose type and earnest we once knew in this;
The nestling of the child upon its mother's breast,
The sweet dreams won us by her "good-night" kiss.

Lord! grant us restful sleep, untroubled, sweet and calm;
Not fitful slumbers, 'mid life's fevered dream.
Oh, seal our weary eyelids with thy touch of balm,
Not to re-ope until the Great Day's gleam.

We only wait, as minors, till the glad Birthday
Shall crown us kings before our Father's throne.
As princely exiles here, we struggle, toil, and pray,
With eyes, by watching, very weary grown.

For comfortless, aye, orphan'd, Thou dost never make
Thy children. Trusting hearts are kept in peace,
And when our night-time comes, Thou'lt bid us sleep to wake
Where every sob is hushed, and sorrows cease.

## THE WORLD DENIES GOD'S SAINTS.

It often distresses the pious that men of the world do not admit their claims to sonship with God. It is a remarkable fact that when the Pharisees were in the last stages of corruption, they were in the greatest favor with the uncircumcised in heart. It is no less true that the more pure and holy any body of men have been, the more malignant have been their enemies. Even the claims of Jesus to a spotless purity were so far from being admitted, that he was said to be in league with the prince of the devils. In like manner

the world hates the followers of Christ, and denies their claims to saintship.

'Tis no surprising thing,
That we should be unknown;
The Jewish world knew not their King,
God's everlasting Son.

Sometimes this uncharitable spirit extends to even some of the professed followers of Christ. In almost every age there have been some who cried, with a loud voice: "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we"—we are the Church—salvation is secured only in our communion—ye are all in your sins. Such conduct not only displays consummate vanity in these boasters, but it often deeply wounds the tender spirit of the true Christian. Although he may not complain of it, it is not without its effect on his heart.

It sinks his spirits. He is sad either because he fears that he may be wrong, or because it grieves him to find any professed friend of Christ so carried away by uncharitableness. In almost every ship are some passengers, who make themselves disagreeable by their unamiable or disobliging tempers. Some are vastly self-conceited. They claim to know everything. They find fault with the navigation of the ship. They see how it might be much better done. They are querulous, and never in a good humor. At such times and in such circumstances, our wisdom is to cease from man and go to God, our exceeding joy. He is a very present help in trouble.

A mighty fortress is our God,
A bulwark never failing;
Our helper He amid the flood
Of mortal ills prevailing.

For still our ancient foe
Doth seek to work us woe;
His craft and power are great,
And armed with cruel hate,
On earth is not his equal.

Did we in our own strength confide,
Our striving would be losing;
Were not the right man on our side,
The man of God's own choosing.
Dost ask who that may be?
Christ Jesus, it is He.
Lord Sabaoth His name,
From age to age the same,
And He must win the battle.

And though this world with devils filled,
Should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God hath willed
His truth to triumph thro' us.
The Prince of darkness grim,
We tremble not for him:
His rage we can endure—
For lo! his doom is sure;
One little word shall fell him.

That word above all earthly powers,
No thanks to them, abideth;

The Spirit and the gifts are ours,
Through Him who with us sideth.
Let good and kindred go,
This mortal life also ;
The body they may kill,
God's truth abideth still,
His kingdom is forever.

*Luther.*

## LEANNESS AND BARRENNESS LAMENTED.

It is sad when the chief song of the believer is over his own leanness. If a vine-tree brings forth no good grapes, it is good for nothing but to be burned. So says and argues the great prophet of the river Chebar. Ezek. xv. If God has done everything proper to be done to his vineyard, it ought to bring forth good grapes. "Now are ye my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." "Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit." It is dreadful

so to live as to incur the blighting curse sent on the barren fig-tree. God is never glorified by a heartless, fruitless profession. A good man deplores the want of zeal and usefulness in his brethren, but most of all in himself. Blessed Paul was very intent that he himself should not run in vain, neither labor in vain. Phil. ii. 16. No preaching is more useful to Christians than that which makes them humble for past neglect, and zealous of good works. Those writings, which abase pride and beget liveliness in the work of God, should be much studied. The following hymn has long been a favorite in the devotions of the closet. It is entitled,

UNFRUITFULNESS LAMENTED.

Long have I sat beneath the sound
Of thy salvation, Lord ;

But still how weak my faith is found,
And knowledge of Thy word.

Oft I frequent Thy holy place,
And hear almost in vain ;
How small a portion of Thy grace
Can my false heart retain !

How cold and feeble is my love !
How negligent my fear !
How low my hope of joys above !
How few affections there !

Great God, thy sovereign power impart,
To give Thy word success ;
Write Thy salvation on my heart,
And make me learn Thy grace.

A holy life, fruitful in good works, is essential to the making of our calling and election sure. But alas! "Men will wrangle for religion; write for it; fight for it; die for it; anything but *live* for it."

We never do our duty till we stir ourselves up to take hold upon God.

All really good works have their root and beginning in unfeigned faith in Christ. John vi. 28, 29; Heb. xi. 6. And all true evangelical faith leads to holiness, because it is itself the very germ of holiness in a sinner's heart.

God's people sometimes fall into a great error respecting their duty. The layman wishes he could preach. The preacher wishes he could turn philanthropist. The philanthropist thinks the patient sufferer far excels him in glorifying God. The patient sufferer wishes he could lead a life of active usefulness. The best way is for every one to stand in his lot, and do his duty there. Let Mordecai be porter, till God calls him to guide the State. Let Daniel go to the lions' den. The path of his duty lies right through that cage of ferocious animals. Let Aquila and Priscilla make

tents when they have nothing better to do. Let Peter feed the sheep and lambs.

Hark! the voice of Jesus crying,
"Who will go and work to-day?
Fields are white, and harvests waiting:
Who will bear the sheaves away?"
Loud and long the Master calleth;
Rich reward he offers free;
Who will answer, gladly saying,
"Here am I; send me, send me."

If you cannot cross the ocean,
And the heathen lands explore,
You can find the heathen nearer,
You can help them at your door.
If you cannot give your thousands,
You can give the widow's mite;
And the least you give for Jesus
Will be precious in His sight.

If you cannot speak like angels,
If you cannot preach like Paul,
You can tell the love of Jesus,
You can say He died for all.

If you cannot rouse the wicked
With the judgment's dread alarms,
You can lead the little children
To the Saviour's waiting arms.

Let none hear you idly saying,
"There is nothing I can do,"
While the souls of men are dying,
And the Master calls for you.
Take the task he gives you gladly;
Let your work your pleasure be;
Answer quickly when he calleth,
"Here am I: send me, send me."

*Anon.*

## THE SUM OF THE WHOLE.

When one looks at these things, perceives the great deceitfulness of his own heart, sees the working of the mystery of iniquity in the world, beholds the abounding of error on all religious subjects, both doctrinal and practical, witnesses many sad and shameful apostasies and gross self-deceptions, his soul is cast down

within him. Abraham is ignorant of him, and Israel acknowledges him not. His faith is so weak that he fails confidently to claim sonship with God. His title to heaven is not so clear as he could wish. In many ways he is at a disadvantage.

For all such I have a word in season:

I. A Word of Instruction;
II. A Word of Encouragement;
III. A Word of Caution.

## I.—A WORD OF INSTRUCTION.

I. Whatever be the case of any one, the basis which God has laid for the faith, support, encouragement, victory and final salvation of his people is ample and covers the whole case: "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And,

Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." 2 Tim. ii. 19. Every heir of life is known of God, and God is known of him. His record is on high; and he hates sin and loves holiness. These are the main pillars on which rests the fabric of Christian hopes, joys, safety and consolation. God has full intelligence of all that takes place, or that can take place. His omniscience covers everything. He can see a grain of wheat in a bushel of chaff. He never regards a sheep as a goat, nor the wheat as tares. He has a distinct vision of all matters relating to the best interests of all his people. He infallibly distinguishes the weak saint from all vain pretenders around him. Though Noah lived in a world wholly given up to sin and folly, yet God knew him from all his generation. Though righteous Lot was the

only good man among the thousands, and perhaps millions in the plain of Sodom, yet God discerned between his servant and his ungodly neighbors. In peace and in war, by sea or on land, on mountains or in cities, in dens or in deserts, in prisons or in palaces, God has never failed to recognize believers as his friends, however obscure or distrustful of themselves.

There is a still higher sense in which God knows His people, *i. e.*, he approves them and regards them with favor. See Ps. i. 6; Amos iii. 2. Often has the word this sense. The fountain of this kind regard is in God's infinite and everlasting love and mercy. God looks upon His people in the face of Christ Jesus; and He loves the image of Christ which they bear in their hearts. All the saints are "elect according to the

foreknowledge of God the Father." 1 Pet. i. 2. "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Rom. viii. 29, 30; compare Eph. i. 3–6. God knows all the affairs of His people as they now stand, or as they shall hereafter stand. He loves His own. He loves them infinitely. He has loved them with an everlasting love. Men may hate and deride them, but God pities and cherishes them. Their judgment is with their God. Their names are in the book of life. Their Saviour reigns. If we cannot do all the good we wish, let us do all the good we can. Let all remember that

God knows and approves their unfulfilled desires and unaccomplished plans of usefulness.

"So do I gather strength and hope anew;
For well I know Thy patient love perceives
Not what I did, but what I strove to do—
And though the full ripe ears be sadly few,
Thou wilt accept my sheaves."

Though the Lord did not permit David to build the temple, yet He took it well of him to meditate so pious a work, and gather much of the treasure necessary to accomplish it. Every epistle to the seven churches of Asia has in it these words: "I know thy works." He knows all about them. And He knows all about His people—their joys and sorrows, their pains and pleasures, their poverty and purposes. If we are distressed about food and raiment, He knows that we have need of these things. The Lord will pro-

vide. Not a sparrow is forgotten before him. And are ye not of more value than many sparrows? The Good Shepherd calleth the sheep by name. He knows them well. John x. 3, 14.

My God, whose gracious pity I may claim,
Calling thee Father—sweet endearing name—
The sufferings of this weak and weary frame,
All, all are known to Thee.

Each secret conflict with indwelling sin,
Each sickening fear I ne'er the prize shall win,
Each pang from irritation, turmoil, sin,—
All, all is known to Thee.

Nay, all by Thee is ordered, chosen, planned,
Each drop that fills my daily cup, Thy hand
Prescribes, for ills none else can understand;
All, all is known to Thee.

And welcome, precious worthy Spirit, make
My little drop of suffering for His sake;
Father, the cup I drink, the path I take,
All, all is known to thee.

*Anon.*

On the seal of God may also be found this inscription: "Let him that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." "If a man therefore purge himself from these [sinful lusts], he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work," 2 Tim. ii. 21. God never intended that His people should have consolation, except in the way of holiness. If men believe that the moral law is not binding as a rule of life, they will wallow in the mire of sin. It is not safe for any man to bless himself in his iniquity. "Say ye to the wicked, it shall be ill with him." He who approves and allows sin, is in the bonds of iniquity. Scougal says: "I had rather see the real impressions of a god-like nature upon my own soul, than have a vision from heaven, or an angel sent to tell me,

that my name was enrolled in the book of life." Men may boast of free grace, and rejoice in justification by faith, and talk fluently of other Scrip ture doctrines, but all will be in vain if they remain filthy and unholy. No man can prove himself a Christian, if he does not hate sin. Among the ancients the entrance to the temple of honor was through the temple of virtue. He who would ascend to glory must be first pure. Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord. But he, who hates sin and perfects holiness, may know that he is of God. "To be amended by a little cross, afraid of a little sin, and affected with a little mercy, is a good evidence of grace in the soul." But no unrenewed man can truly say, "I hate every false way;" "With my mind I serve the law." It is folly not to believe that he that doeth righteous-

ness is righteous, or that he that committeth sin is of the devil. 1 John iii. 7, 8. Personal holiness is the only satisfactory evidence of our acceptance with God. He who loves it has rejoicing in himself, and not in another. Man's destiny is determined in this life. His character is formed here, and it may be known here.

LONGING FOR HOLINESS.

Oh, that the Lord would guide my ways
To keep His statutes still!
Oh, that my God would grant me grace
To know and do His will!

Oh, send Thy Spirit down to write
Thy law upon my heart!
Nor let my tongue indulge deceit,
Nor act the liar's part.

From vanity turn off my eyes;
Let no corrupt design,
Nor covetous desires, arise
Within this soul of mine.

Order my footsteps by Thy word,
And make my heart sincere;
Let sin have no dominion, Lord,
But keep my conscience clear.

My soul hath gone too far astray,
My feet too often slip;
Yet, since I've not forgot Thy way,
Restore Thy wandering sheep.

Make me to walk in Thy commands,
'Tis a delightful road;
Nor let my head, nor heart, nor hands
Offend against my God.

2. In the being, perfections and government of God is laid a sure foundation for the solace of God's people. The darkest gulf into which the mind of man can look is that of atheism. Nor can any scheme of thought present the world otherwise than as a helpless orphan, unless we admit that God is, and that he has an infinitely excellent nature, and that He governs all things. God lacks no

attribute, the existence of which could cheer a good man, nor is His government weak, or foolish, or partial, or precarious. "The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice." Ps. xcvii. 1. No words are better suited to quiet any pious heart than these: "It is the Lord."

The Lord Jehovah reigns,
His throne is built on high;
The garments He assumes
Are light and majesty.
His glories shine with beams so bright,
No mortal eye can bear the sight.

The thunders of His hand
Keep the wide world in awe;
His wrath and justice stand
To guard His holy law;
And where His love resolves to bless,
His truth confirms and seals the grace.

Through all His ancient works,
Surprising wisdom shines;
Confounds the powers of hell,
And breaks their cursed designs.

Strong is His arm, and shall fulfill
His great decrees, His sovereign will.

And can this mighty King
Of glory condescend,
And will He write His name,
My Father and my Friend?
I love His name, I love His word;
Join all my powers and praise the Lord.

3. Nor has the history of God's dealings with His people left any room for doubt that He will be with His own, and help them to the end. Tell me, O vexed soul, when did God ever forsake the righteous, and leave him to perish? Now, all God has done, He will do again when the necessities of His people demand it. Salvation wrought for David or Daniel is as good ground of support to a believer of this day, as if it were part of his own experience. Nor is this all. God has good cause for all He does. He knows that he is acting

wisely. If we could understand what He is doing, we should heartily approve it. The darkest event that ever happened in the Church of God was the death and burial of His holy child, Jesus. Yet, from that came life and salvation to the whole Church. His counsels are of old faithfulness and truth. No plans, no methods, no counsels are as good as His. He manages all perfectly. Give Him time to explain Himself.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
  But trust Him for His grace;
Behind a frowning Providence,
  He hides a smiling face.

His purposes will ripen fast,
  Unfolding every hour:
The bud may have a bitter taste,
  But sweet will be the flower.

Blind unbelief is sure to err,
  And scan His work in vain;
God is His own interpreter,
  And he will make it plain.

4. Moreover, grace and strength are pledged to carry all believers through the worst trials, through all the trials that may come upon them. They may be huge, but divine grace can make the worm Jacob to thresh the mountains. Hear God's promises: "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." "Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine; when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come unto you." "My grace is sufficient for thee." So that we could desire no more, and no better promises than are already given in God's precious word.

Our God, how firm His promise stands!
E'en when He hides His face,
He trusts in our Redeemer's hands,
His glory and His grace.

Then why, my soul, these sad complaints
Since Christ and we are one?
Thy God is faithful to His saints,
Is faithful to His Son.

Beneath His smiles my heart has lived,
And part of heaven possessed;
I praise His name for grace received,
And trust Him for the rest.

5. Nor does God ever afflict capriciously. He does nothing but for good cause. "He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." If He chastens us, it is "for our profit that we may be partakers of his holiness." Lam. iii. 33; Heb. xii. 10.

6. The great sources of triumph to the suffering saint are to be sought in the future. The light which God

has kindled beyond the tomb is bright enough to dispel the darkness of midnight—the darkness of the grave. A loving disciple of the last generation gave the world this fable:

Fraternally the angel of sleep and the angel of death wandered over the earth. It was evening. They reclined on a hill not far from the habitation of man. A melancholy stillness reigned, and the evening clock in the distant village was not heard.

Silently, according to their custom, sat two benevolent genii of humanity, in a sad embrace, and already night drew near.

The angel of sleep arose from his mossy couch, and scattered with a gentle hand the invisible seed of slumber. The evening wind wafted it to the silent dwelling of the wearied husbandman. Now sweet sleep em-

braced the inhabitants of the rural cottage, from the gray-haired man who leans upon his staff, to the infant in the cradle. The sick forgot their pain; the melancholy their sorrow; the poor their wants. Every eye was closed.

After his labor was accomplished, the benevolent angel of sleep again lay down with his serious brother. "When the dawn appears," said he, in a tone of cheerful innocence, "then man will praise me as his friend and benefactor! Oh, it is sweet to do good unseen and in secret! How happy are we, the invisible messengers of the Good Spirit! How lovely our noiseless occupation!"

Thus spoke the friendly angel of sleep. The angel of death regarded him with silent grief, and a tear, such as mortals weep, stood in his large dark eye. "Alas!" said he, "that I

cannot, like you, rejoice in the gratitude of man. The earth calls me her enemy and the disturber of her joy."

"Oh! my brother," replied the angel of sleep, "will not the good, on awaking, discover in you their friend and benefactor, and gratefully bless you? Are not we brethren, and the messengers of one Father?"

Thus he spoke. Then the eyes of the angel of death brightened, and tenderly the genii embraced each other.

I proceed now to give—

## II.—A WORD OF COMFORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT.

Here the chief difficulty is to tell where to begin and where to leave off. The Bible is full of divine cordials for the weary. Time would fail to recount them all. Here are some of them:

1. "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ." 2 Cor. i. 3–5. This is a mere sample. Other Scriptures are particular, and specify all the woes and the ills of life. If one has lost a child, wife, husband, father, brother, sister, God's word meets the case in all its essential troubles, and points to suitable resources. Besides, the comforts of God are very seasonable. The great excellency of the prophet's visit to the widow of Sarepta, and of the angel's interposition to save Isaac from death, con-

sisted in their peculiar fitness to the existing state of things.

2. Nor are the comforts of God few and slight. On the contrary, they are ample, various, and abundant. They are also mighty. How could it be otherwise? They are the "consolations of God." Their Author secures their efficiency. The Scriptures speak of "strong consolation." Heb. vi. 18. They are also accessible to all who will embrace them. And they are clearly, and often spoken of in Scripture: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." Rom. xv. 4. "This is my comfort in my affliction: for Thy word hath quickened me." "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn Thy statutes.

Ps. cxix. 50, 71. To be yet more specific:

3. There is a "need be" for all the trials endured by the people of God. We may not now know why He contends with us, but the Lord knows, and that is enough. He is the Physician. The efficacy of a good remedy does not depend upon the sick man knowing what his ailment is, nor the nature of the dose given him, nor the manner of its operation. The best men seldom know the extent and power of their spiritual maladies until the Great Physician works a cure. He who has promised the complete sanctification of His people is alone fit to decide when and how they must be tried. Who are we, that we should attempt to take things out of His divine hand? One of the most afflicted men I ever saw, said this was for a joy unto him: "He

doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." Lam. iii. 33. Every good man ought to say that he both deserves and requires chastisement. God sees in us evil sufficient to account for all our trials. If God loves us, He will afflict us, that He may wean us from our idols. "Wherefore should a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?" "Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil also?" Such discipline strengthens our hatred of sin and our love of holiness. He who has undertaken to deliver us, will bring forth judgment unto truth, complete the work of faith with power, and present us without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, before God. No good and wise man would dare to ask to be set free from all trials.

4. Another ground of comfort is that no trial befalls us, but such as is common to men. This solace is not based upon mere community in suffering. But when we are joint partakers in sorrow with other good men, we comfort ourselves thus: These sufferers give evidence of love to God. If they are God's friends, and yet are afflicted, surely I may regard my sufferings as also sent in token of unchanging love. If they find it good to be tried, it may be well for me to endure the same. If Divine grace makes them conquerors, it can give me the victory also. This reasoning is fair and unanswerable. Take out of the lives of Moses, David, Paul, Newton, Bunyan and Brainerd all which they learned by means of sanctified affliction, and they would be comparatively destitute of interest.

5. Trials, properly used, greatly strengthen Christian graces. Severities, which do not impair, give vigor to the human body. The same is true of the human intellect. Studies which most heavily tax our mental powers, do, when mastered, become the means of the greatest enlargement. Who ever had much patience until he was severely tried? Who ever loved much unless he was called to forsake all for Christ? Who ever had strong faith unless he had walked in darkness, and had no light?

6. The Word of God abounds with the most consoling truths: "I will be thy God," "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." "He will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able to bear." These are mere samples of the exceeding great and precious promises of God. It adds to their value that they are freely

given, are unchangeable, cannot be frustrated, and are the common inheritance of all the heirs of glory. Neither Paul nor David had a warrant, beyond the weakest saint, to appropriate these promises to themselves. What believer has ever been in the school of adversity, and not learned many valuable lessons? Pointing to his trophies, he says: "These are the spoils, which I have won in battle, and I dedicate them to maintain the house of the Lord." Like the old warrior, he may have been wounded in battle, but his scars being healed are his glory.

7. Earth is not our home, though some silly people would love to have it such. But God has prepared for the saints a better portion—heavenly mansions. Though God's people entertain the hope of finally wearing the crown of life, who would long for it

and pant after it, if he had no trials? God knows us better than we know ourselves. We are in danger of loving our present abode, and He sends us trial after trial to remind us that this is not our rest. Perfection of character and the highest bliss cannot be attained in this world. How many look upon a removal from earth as a "melancholy exile!" It is chiefly the children of sorrow that sing:

Jerusalem, my happy home!
Name ever dear to me!
When shall my troubles have an end
In joy, and peace, and thee?
When shall these eyes thy heaven-built walls
And pearly gates behold?
Thy bulwarks with salvation strong,
And streets of shining gold?
O when, thou city of my God,
Shall I thy courts ascend,
Where congregations ne'er break up,
And Sabbaths never end?

Such songs are apt to be most

relished by those who have felt the bitterness of life. Anything is good for us that makes us pant after heaven. He who is well trained in the school of affliction often has little to do, when death comes, but to gather up his feet in his bed, and bid a glad farewell to earth and a joyful welcome to heaven.

8. Another thing that should reconcile us to suffering, is that thereby God is glorified. This is the most important of all considerations. Christ would not have had a name above others, had not his high praises been sung in prisons, in lions' dens, on racks, and from the midst of fiery flames. These tributes of grateful homage have been abundant and without a parallel. On the supposition that the Bible is a fable, no man can account for them. No other system has ever produced such re-

sults. Christ is glorified, first, by our active service, and secondly, by suffering for Him. It would detract no more from Christ's honor that all His ministers and people to the end of the world should keep silence, than that they should cease to teach the world by example how men can suffer for His name. So that, if God deny to one all participation in active efforts to spread the truth, yet, if by cheerful submission to adversity he can show forth the power of God's grace, let him glorify God on this behalf. To praise God in word, in the midst of success and prosperity, may be done by the veriest worldling or hypocrite; but to extol His name when in a sea of trouble can be done by none, except those with whom is the secret of the Lord.

I come now to give—

### III.—A WORD OF CAUTION.

1. Refuse not to acknowledge the hand of God upon you. Ascribe not to second causes that which belongs God Himself.

2. Beware of a murmuring spirit. We may complain to God, but we must not complain of God. We should resign all to His hand. We must not only submit, we must acquiesce. Meekness is far better than turbulence. Quietness excels perturbation. Silence is often a duty, and a very reasonable duty it is. The Psalmist was a happy man when he could say, "Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child." Ps. cxxxi. 2. We know not all the causes which have led the Most High to treat us thus and so.

3. Let us particularly guard against all atheistic and unworthy thoughts. That was a terrible rebuke: "Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God?" Is. xl. 27. The Most High does see and regard.

4. Let us never forget that rebellion is sin, and that it does no good, even for a time. The wild bull caught in the net may bellow, and toss, and struggle; but he hurts himself only. His struggles do no good.

5. Nor let us forget our past experience. Almost every one can see how good has come to him out of evils which have already befallen him. We are warranted in hoping that it will be so in days to come.

6. Let us inquire whether our trials humble us. They are intended to remind us of our errors. A little can-

dor and self-examination will soon convince us that we deserve all that has come upon us.

7. Let us not forsake God, the fountain of living waters; nor hew us out cisterns which can hold no water. Let us not look to the creature, but to the Creator. It was a grand error of the Israelites, when they got into trouble, to send down to Egypt, or over to Assyria, for help, or for horsemen. Let us not be alike foolish. Jehovah is God.

8. Let us not sing dirges, but unite with primitive Christians in the faithful saying: "For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us; if we believe not, yet he abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself." 2 Tim. ii. 11–13.

9. Take heed, lest in your sorrow

for the dead, you forget your duties to the living. A release from one duty is often a call to increased vigor in other duties.

10. Forget not the many circumstances of mercy and favor attending your trials. "Our trouble is that we write our mercies on the sand, and engrave our afflictions upon a rock."

11. Be not unmindful that you are the follower of a suffering Saviour. If you fare as well as your Master, why should you complain? His cup was more bitter than any ever put into your hand. Let your thoughts dwell on His sorrows, till you are ready to forget your own.

12. Remember that sorrow and suffering are among the badges of discipleship.

"The path of sorrow, and that path alone,
Leads to the land where sorrows are unknown."

13. Beware of slight views of sin. Labor clearly to see its heinousness. The least sin is a greater evil than all our earthly sufferings. No man's case can be very bad if he hates sin, and is freed from its reigning and condemning power. When sin lies light upon us, a small affliction will be heavy; but when sin lies heavy upon us, all afflictions will be light.

14. Never charge God foolishly. Never speak rashly nor lightly of affliction. Beware of bringing any reproach on Christ or His cause. Our enemies always watch for our halting, but never more than in the day of our sore trials.

15. Beware of indolence and carnal security. As yet your afflictions may be very light, but remember the days of darkness are not all past till we reach the portals of Paradise No man has any more grace than he

is found to possess upon a fair trial. If God loves you, He will prove you. Be assured you will need all the grace you can possibly secure. Be not high-minded, but fear. Put on the whole armor of God.

16. Do not shun the society of the most afflicted of God's people. Accustom yourself to scenes of trial and sorrow. "It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting; for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better." Shake hands with sorrow in its most haggard forms. Then, when it presents itself to you, you can say, I have seen the likes of you before. The sight of Goliah did not agitate David, because he had fought with a lion and a bear.

17. Beware of a censorious, or bitter spirit towards your afflicted brethren, and endeavor to comfort them.

Turn not a deaf ear to any tale of sorrow. Your plans will be foolish and your manliness all gone, if the Most High forsake you. No mortal can tell on whom the next heavy stroke shall fall. Let us gird up the loins of our minds; let us watch and be sober; let us bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ; let us weep with those that weep; let us live near to God; let us remember that the vows of God are upon us; let us go forth without the camp, willingly bearing the reproach of Christ; and when the chief Shepherd shall appear, we shall also appear with Him in glory.

18. Heaven consists of those who have fought their way to the kingdom. When John saw the great multitude, which no man could number, standing before the throne, and before the Lamb, and clothed with white

robes, and palms in their hands, and singing such a song as belongs to the temple above, one of the elders said, "What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Rev. vii. 13-17.

Thus have I endeavored "to speak a word in season to him that is weary." Isa. l. 4. Oh! that it may help on each pilgrim in the greatness of his way.

THE LORD SHALL REIGN FOREVER, EVEN THY GOD, O ZION, UNTO ALL GENERATIONS. PRAISE YE THE LORD.

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## THE CHURCH TRIUMPHS OVER INSULTS.

"Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness the Lord shall be a light unto me. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness. Then she that is mine

enemy shall see it, and shame shall cover her which said unto me, Where is the Lord thy God? mine eyes shall behold her: now shall she be trodden down as the mire of the streets." Micah vii. 8–10.

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## WHO IS TRULY BLESSED? LET JESUS ANSWER.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed

are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake." Matt. v. 3–11.

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## CHRIST'S FAREWELL TO HIS FOLLOWERS.

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither

thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father. Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake. Verily, verily, I

say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it. If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father,

and ye in me, and I in you. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me. These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remem-

brance, whatsoever I have said unto you. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe. Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence." John xiv. 1–31.

PAUL'S VIEWS AT THE CLOSE OF LIFE.

"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." 2 Tim. iv. 6–8.

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THE LAST WORDS OF THE BIBLE.

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst, come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this

book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly; Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." Rev xxii. 17–21.

THE END.

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